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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

NFAC #2177-78
25 May 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: Presidential Briefing Coordinator

FROM : George W. Allen
Associate NIO for Special Studies

SUBJECT : The Soviet Intervention Phenomenon

1. I believe the answer to the question posed in your memo of 22 May is "yes," i.e., recent and current Soviet intervention do reflect increasing sophistication and hard-won victories, and there are other important influences, e.g., improved logistics and increasing concern for US initiatives. Another major consideration is the convergence of these trends with an apparent increase in opportunities.

2. It is important, however, that we not obfuscate the issue by forcing a polarization of views. There seemed to be a tendency in this morning's discussion--by some participants--to insist on a black-or-white characterization of the current nature of the phenomenon of Soviet interventionism, when--in fact--there was a large element of truth in most of the views expressed.

-- The boldest and most starkly blatant Soviet military adventure since World War II (excluding the participation of Soviet fighter regiments in air combat along the Yalu during the Korean War) was their introduction of combat forces into Cuba in 1962. This included headquarters units, air defense units, coast defense units, and ground combat units (four reinforced motorized rifle regiments), as well as the MRBMs whose removal we demanded.

-- Aside from the absence of Soviet ground combat units and strategic rocket forces, the Soviet interventions in the Middle East and Africa since 1970 are not qualitatively different in the sense of force structure or composition, and command and control mechanisms.

-- Their mode and speed of deployment have been different, reflecting the development of Soviet airlift capabilities and the closer proximity of the Middle East and Africa to the

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USSR. Also, undeniably, the sophistication of their command and control mechanisms has improved with experience and with advances in technology.

-- The opportunities for intervention may be greater now than in the 60s. But it is certainly also true that their willingness to exploit these opportunities has increased. This willingness may, however, be selective; their response to an opportunity in Latin America in the near future might differ markedly from what we have seen in Angola and Ethiopia.

-- Few would seriously argue that the apparent willingness of the Soviets to intervene militarily does not result from greater confidence that the risks are less now--in most areas of the world--than they were in Cuba in 1962.

-- The post-Vietnam reluctance of the US to engage in military interventions is a major factor--the Soviets almost certainly perceive the risks of confrontation on the ground as less than they seemed to be in the 60s, at least in Africa.

-- Another major factor is the shift in the strategic balance. This does not necessarily imply Soviet strategic superiority; what it does imply is that--however they perceive the balance, i.e., parity or superiority--it is certainly more permissive of flexibility on their part than was the overwhelming strategic superiority of the US in the 50s and 60s. (Note, however, that the Cuban adventure of '62 took place in the era of US superiority.)

-- The bottom line, it seems to me, is that the Soviets have evolved effective techniques and capabilities for military intervention, and a willingness to exercise them in areas and under political conditions in which it is difficult for the US to react effectively.

-- It is important to recognize the significance of these political inhibitions on our actions. The fact that Somalia was an aggressor, and that Ethiopia was the victim of aggression, gave the USSR's actions in Ethiopia a legitimacy--in the eyes of others--that would have undercut the effectiveness of any overt countermove on our part.

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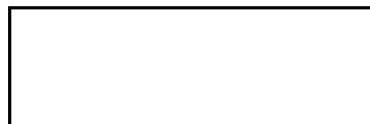
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-- In intervention dynamics, therefore, it helps to be on the side of the angels. Part of any lasting solution to the problem is to align ourselves politically with political forces in Africa--and elsewhere--which have some promise, with modest support, of playing the dominant role in the future of their countries. If there is one lesson we should have learned in Vietnam, it would be not to align ourselves with forces which--by themselves--have no popular appeal and no chance of political survival.

-- On the other hand, if we choose to engage the Soviets and Cubans in what we perceive as a contest to see who can most effectively intervene militarily--without regard to local political conditions--we will be risking long-term peripheral entanglements of the Vietnam sort with all of the debilitating high-cost, high-risk disadvantages of that unfortunate adventure, and little hope of successfully stemming the Soviet-Cuban phenomenon.

3. It is important, then, not to focus solely on the nature of the threat of Soviet interventionism, but to examine carefully the circumstances in which it is most likely to occur in the future, and to look for ways in which we can influence conditions or situations in such a fashion as to deny opportunities to the Soviets.



George W. Allen

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SOVIET ECONOMIC DISBURSEMENTS TO SOUTHERN AFRICA
(Millions US \$)

	1975	1976	1977	Totals
Angola				
Mozambique				
Tanzania				
Zambia				
SWAPO				
ZANU/ZAPU				
Totals	5.3	2.0	4.9	12.2

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SOVIET MILITARY DELIVERIES TO SOUTHERN AFRICA
(Millions US \$)

	1975	1976	1977	Totals
Angola				
Mozambique				
Tanzania				
Zambia				
SWAPO				
ZANU/ZAPU				
Totals	< 91	< 247	224	< 562

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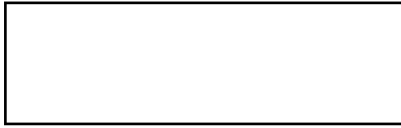
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28 Sept 76

General Instructions on NSC Briefing

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1.



pages of 27 Ag is fine.

Now need to call down:

What is obvious -

What are they running thru?

e.g. Almost everyone has
reason to favor us
plan today

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2. Not enough on impact of Namibia breakdown

3. Include chart with basic trends in
Rhodesia's economy

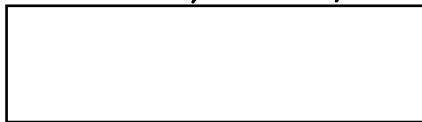
4. What's happened to the whole one on
Cubans in area - its down to 1 para

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Let's not waste all that effort -



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Fin for NSC - 2 min.

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